DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 186 332 SO 012 574

TITLE Report to the President: President's Commission on the Holocaust.
INSTITUTION President's Commission on the Holocaust, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 27 Sep 79
NOTE 49p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Foundation Programs; Higher Education; *International Crimes; *Jews; Museums; Philanthropic Foundations; Research Opportunities
IDENTIFIERS *Holocaust; *Nazism

ABSTRACT

On November 1, 1978, President Carter established the President's Commission on the Holocaust and charged it with the responsibility of deciding what might constitute an appropriate national memorial to all those who had perished in the Holocaust. This publication is the report of that Commission which consisted of 34 members including survivors, lay and religious leaders of all faiths, historians, scholars, and congressmen. The Holocaust was a crime unique in the annals of human history, different not only in the quantity of violence--the sheer numbers killed--but in its manner and purpose as a mass criminal enterprise organized by the state against defenseless civilian populations. Remembering the Holocaust can instill caution, fortify restraint, and protect against future evil or indifference. The Commission made recommendations for memorials. First, a National Holocaust Memorial Museum which will present the Holocaust through pictorial accounts, films, and other visual exhibits shall be built in Washington D.C. Secondly, an Educational Foundation dedicated to the pursuit of educational work through grants, extension services, joint projects, research, and exploration of issues raised by the Holocaust shall be founded. Thirdly, the Commission recommends that a Committee on Conscience composed of distinguished moral leaders in America be appointed. This Committee would receive reports of genocide anywhere in the world. Additional recommendations included observance of "Days of Remembrance," ratification of the Genocide Convention, prosecution of Nazi war criminals in America, and the maintenance of Jewish cemeteries abroad. (Author/RM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED186332

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

MAY 29 1980

Report to the President

President's Commission on the Holocaust

Elie Wiesel, Chairman

S4 012 S-74

2

September 27, 1979

MAY 27 1980

President's Commission on the Holocaust

Office of the Chairman

September 27, 1979

Dear Mr. President:

It is with a deep sense of privilege that I submit to you, in accordance with your request, the report of your Commission on the Holocaust. Never before have its members, individually and collectively, given so much of themselves to a task that is both awesome and forbidding, a task which required reaching far back into the past as well as taking a hard look into the future.

Our central focus was memory—our own and that of the victims during a time of unprecedented evil and suffering. That was the Holocaust, an era we must remember not only because of the dead; it is too late for them. Not only because of the survivors; it may even be late for them. Our remembering is an act of generosity, aimed at saving men and women from apathy to evil, if not from evil itself.

We wish, through the work of this Commission, to reach and transform as many human beings as possible. We hope to share our conviction that when war and genocide unleash hatred against any one people or peoples, all are ultimately engulfed in the fire.

With this conviction and mindful of your mandate, Mr. President, we have explored during the past several months of our existence the various ways and means of remembering—and of moving others to remember—the Holocaust and its victims, an event that was intended to erase memory.

Our first question may sound rhetorical: Why remember, why remember at all? Is not human nature opposed to keeping alive memories that hurt and disturb? The more cruel the wound, the greater the effort to cover it, to hide it beneath other wounds, other scars. Why then cling to unbearable memories that may forever rob us of our sleep? Why not forget, turn the page, and proclaim: let it remain buried beneath the dark nightmares of our subconscious. Why not spare our children the weight of our collective burden and allow them to start their lives free of nocturnal obsessions and complexes, free of Auschwitz and its shadows?

These questions, Mr. President, would not perhaps be devoid of merit if it were possible to extirpate the Holocaust from history and make believe we can forget. But it is not possible and we cannot. Like it or not, the Event must and will dominate future events. Its centrality in the creative endeavors of our contemporaries remains undisputed. Philosophers and social scientists, psychologists and moralists, theologians and artists: all have termed it a

Suite 7233, 726 Jackson Place, NW, Washington, D.C. 20503
202—395—7343

watershed in the annals of mankind. What was comprehensible before Treblinka is comprehensible no longer. After Treblinka, man's ability to cope with his condition was shattered; he was pushed to his limits and beyond. Whatever has happened since must therefore be judged in the light of Treblinka. Forgetfulness is no solution.

Treblinka and Auschwitz, Majdanek and Belzec, Buchenwald and Ponar, these and other capitals of the Holocaust kingdom must therefore be remembered, and for several reasons.

First, we cannot grant the killers a posthumous victory. Not only did they humiliate and assassinate their victims, they wanted also to destroy their memory. They killed them twice, reducing them to ashes and then denying their deed. Not to remember the dead now would mean to become accomplices to their murderers.

Second, we cannot deny the victims the fulfillment of their last wish; their idée fixe to bear witness. What the merchant from Saloniki, the child from Lodz, the rabbi from Radzimin, the carpenter from Warsaw and the scribe from Vilna had in common was the passion, the compulsion to tell the tale—or to enable someone else to do so. Every ghetto had its historians, every deathcamp its chroniclers. Young and old, learned and unlearned, everybody kept diaries, wrote journals, composed poems and prayers. They wanted to remember and to be remembered. They wanted to defeat the enemy's conspiracy of silence, to communicate a spark of the fire that nearly consumed their generation, and, above all, to serve as warning to future generations. Instead of looking with contempt upon mankind that betrayed them, the victims dreamed of redeeming it with their own charred souls. Instead of despairing of man and his possible salvation, they put their faith in him. Defying all logic, all reason, they opted for humanity and chose to try, by means of their testimony, to save it from indifference that might result in the ultimate catastrophe, the nuclear one.

Third, we must remember for our own sake, for the sake of our own humanity. Indifference to the victims would result, inevitably, in indifference to ourselves, an indifference that would ultimately no longer be sin but, in the words of our Commissioner Bayard Rustin, "a terrifying curse" and its own punishment.

The most vital lesson to be drawn from the Holocaust era is that Auschwitz was possible because the enemy of the Jewish people and of mankind—and it is always the same enemy—succeeded in dividing, in separating, in splitting human society, nation against nation, Christian against Jew, young against old. And not enough people cared. In Germany and other occupied countries, most spectators chose not to interfere with the killers; in other lands, too, many persons chose to remain neutral. As a result, the killers killed, the victims died, and the world remained world.

Still, the killers could not be sure. In the beginning they made one move and waited. Only when there was no reaction did they make another move and still

another. From racial laws to medieval decrees, from illegal expulsions to the establishment of ghettos and then to the invention of deathcamps, the killers carried out their plans only when they realized that the outside world simply did not care about the Jewish victims. Soon after, they decided they could do the same thing, with equal impunity, to other peoples as well. As always, they began with Jews. As always, they did not stop with Jews alone.

Granted that we must remember, Mr. President, the next question your Commission had to examine was whom are we to remember? It is vital that the American people come to understand the distinctive reality of the Holocaust: millions of innocent civilians were tragically killed by the Nazis. They must be remembered. However, there exists a moral imperative for special emphasis on the six million Jews. While not all victims were Jews, *all* Jews were victims, destined for annihilation solely because they were born Jewish. They were doomed not because of something they had done or proclaimed or acquired but because of who they were: sons and daughters of the Jewish people. As such they were sentenced to death collectively and individually as part of an official and "legal" plan unprecedented in the annals of history.

During our journey to Eastern Europe—a full description of which is attached (Appendix B)—the Commission observed that while Jews are sometimes mentioned on public monuments in Poland, they were not referred to in Russia at all. In Kiev's Babi Yar, for instance, where nearly 80,000 Jews were murdered in September 1941, the word Jew is totally absent from the memorial inscriptions.

Our Commission believes that because they were the principal target of Hitler's Final Solution, we must remember the six million Jews and, through them and beyond them, but never without them, rescue from oblivion all the men, women and children, Jewish and non-Jewish, who perished in those years in the forests and camps of the kingdom of night.

The universality of the Holocaust lies in its uniqueness: the Event is essentially Jewish, yet its interpretation is universal. It involved even distant nations and persons who lived far away from Birkenau's flames or who were born afterward.

Our own country was also involved, Mr. President. The valiant American nation fought Hitler and Fascism and paid for its bravery and idealism with the lives of hundreds and thousands of its sons; their sacrifices shall not be forgotten. And yet, and yet, away from the battlefield, the judgment of history will be harsh. Sadly but realistically, our great government was not without blemish. One cannot but wonder what might have happened had the then American President and his advisors demonstrated concern and compassion by appointing in 1942 or 1943 a President's Commission to prevent the Holocaust. How many victims, Jews and non-Jews, could have been saved had we changed our immigration laws, opened our gates more widely, protested more forcefully. We did not. Why not? This aspect of the Event must and will be explored thoroughly and honestly within the framework of the Commission's work. The decision to face the issue constitutes an act of moral courage worthy

of our nation.

The question of how to remember makes up the bulk of the Commission's report. Memorial, museum, education, research, commemoration, action to prevent a recurrence: these are our areas of concern. I hope that these recommendations will be acceptable to you, Mr. President, reflecting as they do the joint thinking of the members of the Commission and its advisors over a period of 7 months.

During that time, we held meetings and hearings and studied known and hitherto undisclosed material. Our hope was to reach a consensus among our diverse membership, which includes academicians and civic leaders, Christians and Jews, native Americans and survivors from the deathcamps who found a welcome and a refuge here and who now, as American citizens, enjoy the privileges of our democracy.

Special attention was paid to the opinions, views, and feelings of the survivors, men and women who know the problems from the inside and who ask for nothing more than the opportunity to show their gratitude. "Our adopted country was kind to us," says Commissioner Sigmund Strochlitz, "and we wish to repay in some way by helping to build a strong and human society based on equality and justice for all." Their willingness to share their knowledge, their pain, their anguish, even their agony, is motivated solely by their conviction that their survival was for a purpose. A survivor sees himself or herself as a messenger and guardian of secrets entrusted by the dead. A survivor fears he or she may be the last to remember, the last to warn, the last to tell the tale that cannot be told, the tale that must be told in its totality, before it is too late, before the last witness leaves the stage and takes his awesome testimony back to the dead.

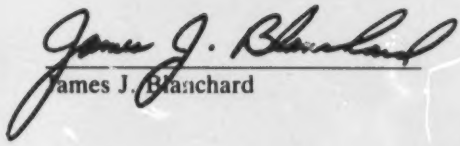
In the hope that you will enable this testimony to be brought to the attention of the American people, and the world, I submit the attached report to you, Mr. President.

Respectfully yours,

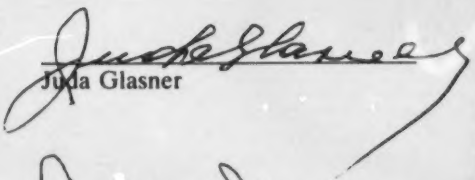
Elie Wiesel

Chairman

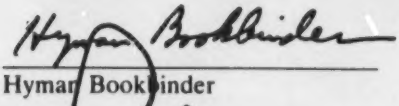
The Honorable Jimmy Carter
President of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20500



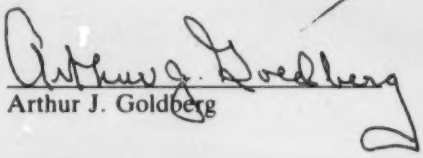
James J. Blanchard



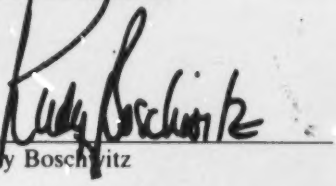
Juda Glasner



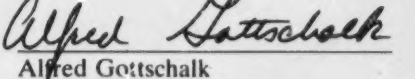
Hyman Bookbinder



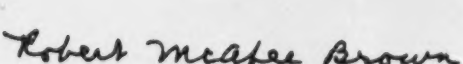
Arthur J. Goldberg



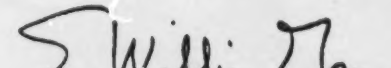
Rudy Boschwitz



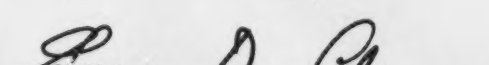
Alfred Gottschalk



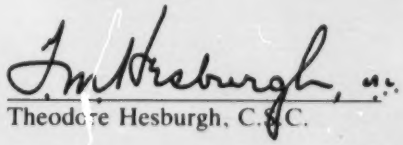
Robert McAfee Brown



S. William Green

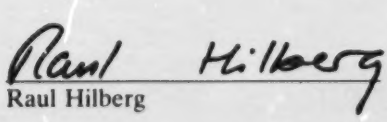


Gerson D. Cohen



Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C.

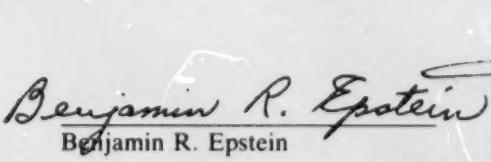
John C. Danforth



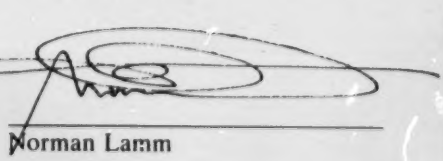
Raul Hilberg

Kitty Dukakis

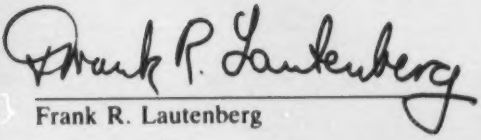
Henry M. Jackson



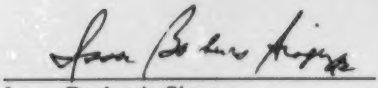
Benjamin R. Epstein



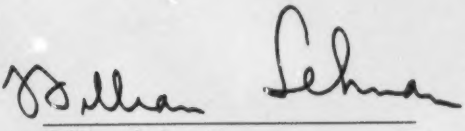
Norman Lamm



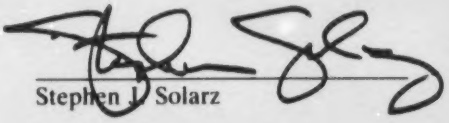
Frank R. Lautenberg



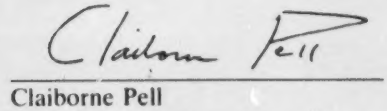
Isaac Bashevis Singer



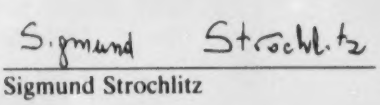
William Lehman



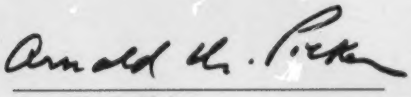
Stephen J. Solarz



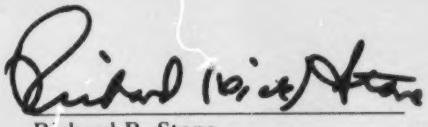
Claiborne Pell



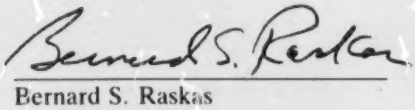
Sigmund Strochlitz



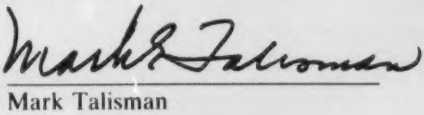
Arnold M. Picker



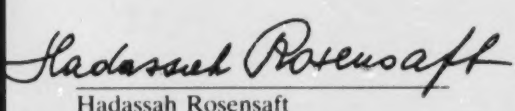
Richard B. Stone



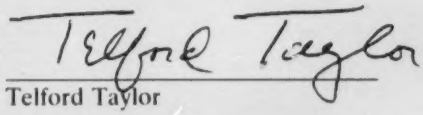
Bernard S. Raskas



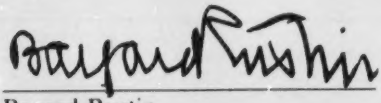
Mark Talisman



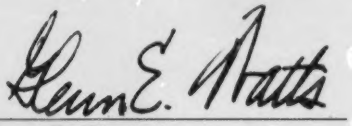
Hadassah Rosensaft



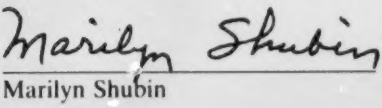
Telford Taylor



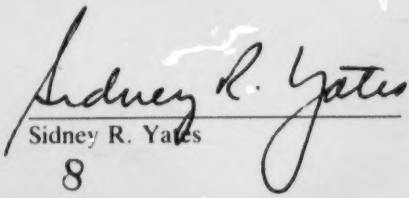
Bayard Rustin



Glenn E. Watts



Marilyn Shubin



Sidney R. Yates

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		*Page Number*
I.	Functioning of the Commission	1
II.	Guiding Principles	3
III.	Proposals and Projects: Specific Recommendations	9
	1. Memorial/Museum	9
	2. Educational Foundation	12
	3. Committee on Conscience	13
	4. Days of Remembrance	15
	5. Additional Recommendations	16
	6. Funding	17
IV	Appendices	
	A. The Executive Order	20
	B. Study Mission to Eastern Europe, Denmark, and Israel	22
	C. President's Address—Days of Remembrance	26
	D. Remarks of the Vice President—Days of Remembrance	28
	E. Remarks of the Chairman, Elie Wiesel—"The Holocaust, Beginning or End?"	18
	F. Remarks of the Chairman, Elie Wiesel upon Presentation of the Report to the President	33
	G. Remarks of the President at the Presentation of the final Report	35
	H. Commissioners, Advisory Board Members, Staff	37
	I. Acknowledgements	40

I. FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMISSION

On November 1, 1978, President Carter established the President's Commission on the Holocaust and charged it with the responsibility to submit a report "with respect to the establishment and maintenance of an appropriate memorial to those who perished in the Holocaust, to examine the feasibility for the creation and maintenance of the memorial through contributions by the American people, and to recommend appropriate ways for the nation to commemorate April 28 and 29, 1979, which the Congress has resolved shall be 'Days of Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust.'"*

The Commission, chaired by Elie Wiesel, consisted of 34 members, including survivors, lay and religious leaders of all faiths, historians and scholars, five Congressmen and five Senators, and was aided by a 27-person Advisory Board.

The Commission began its operations on January 15, 1979, holding its first meeting one month later on February 15. Subsequent to the first meeting, the Commission divided into a series of working subcommittees: *Museum and Monument, Secondary Education and Curricula, Higher Education and Research, Human Rights, "Days of Remembrance," Fact-Finding and Travel Mission,* and *Funding.* Each of the subcommittees, co-chaired by a member of the Commission and of the Advisory Board, met to formulate and refine the Commission's recommendations. All formulations were then presented to a meeting of the Advisory Board on April 10 and to the Commission as a whole on April 24.

In addition, during the first weeks of the Commission's life, suggestions were solicited from thousands of Americans: survivor organizations and individual survivors; a broad range of civic, labor, and religious leaders; Holocaust scholars and educators; members of the Polish-American community who had been subject to Nazi persecution as well as Armenian, Black, and other Americans whose historic experience make them particularly sensitive to the issues raised by the Holocaust.

In its surveys and dialogues, the Commission sought to formulate collectively what might constitute an appropriate national memorial to all those who had perished in the Holocaust while still honoring the memory and identity of those groups singled out for mass annihilation. In many respects, the recommendations and proposals of the Commission reflect the collective wisdom gleaned from

*Executive Order Number 12093, dated November 1, 1978. See Appendix A. An identical copy of the Report was submitted to the Secretary of the Interior as mandated by the Executive Order.

discussion with a broad cross-section of individuals and groups.

During this formative period, several Congressmen held local hearings in their districts on the work of the Commission, with testimony from scores of witnesses, including survivors, teachers, clergymen, representatives of a broad range of community organizations, civic and political leaders, scholars, educators, theologians, artists, and writers. After the Commission had reached its preliminary conclusions, additional public hearings were held.

Within the first 3 months the Commission planned many of the activities conducted during the Days of Remembrance and developed models for future commemorations of the Holocaust. The Days of Remembrance activities culminated in a National Civic Holocaust Commemoration Service held in the Capitol Rotunda on April 24, the internationally recognized memorial day for the Holocaust (see Proposal 4 for a report of nationwide activities).

The second Commission meeting was actually held on the Day of Remembrance, April 24. It refined the proposals of the various subcommittees, and then charged the staff and committees to develop final recommendations. On June 7, the Commission met a third time to consider the proposals; overwhelming approval was given to the recommendations which make up the body of this report. Furthermore, the Commission decided to undertake a fact-finding mission, at the members' personal expense, to sites of Holocaust annihilation and memorials in Poland, the Soviet Union, Denmark, and Israel. The purpose of the journey was threefold: to ascertain what other countries have done, to lay the foundation for future cooperation between the Commission and major memorial and scholarly institutions; and to pay tribute to the victims of the Holocaust by visiting the places of their death and the shrines erected to their memory. (A report of the fact-finding mission is in Appendix B.)

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Commission's efforts have been undertaken in the service of memory, with the conviction that in remembrance lie the seeds of transformation and renewal. Throughout the Commission's work, two guiding principles have provided the philosophical rationale. They are: (1) the uniqueness of the Holocaust; and (2) the moral obligation to remember.

The Uniqueness of the Holocaust

The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic extermination of six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators as a central act of state during the Second World War; as night descended, millions of other peoples were swept into this net of death. It was a crime unique in the annals of human history, different not only in the quantity of violence—the sheer numbers killed—but in its manner and purpose as a mass criminal enterprise organized by the state against defenseless civilian populations. The decision was to kill every Jew everywhere in Europe: the definition of Jew as target for death transcended all boundaries. There is evidence indicating that the Nazis intended ultimately to wipe out the Slavs and other peoples; had the war continued or had the Nazis triumphed, Jews might not have remained the final victims of Nazi genocide, but they were certainly its first.

The concept of the annihilation of an entire people, as distinguished from their subjugation, was unprecedented; never before in human history had genocide been an all-pervasive government policy unaffected by territorial or economic advantage and unchecked by moral or religious constraints. Ordinarily, acts of violence directed by a government against a populace are related to perceived needs of national security or geographic expansion, with hostilities diminishing after the enemy surrenders. In the case of the Nazis, however, violence was intensified after subjugation, especially in Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe, against all the subjugated populations. Jews were particular targets despite the fact that they possessed no army and were not an integral part of the military struggle. Indeed, the destruction frequently conflicted with and took priority over the war effort. Trains that could have been used to carry munitions to the front or to retrieve injured soldiers were diverted for the transport of victims to the death camps. Even after the Nazi defeat on the Russian front, when it became evident that the Germans had lost the war, the killings were intensified in a last desperate attempt at complete annihilation. Clearly, genocide was an end in itself independent of the requisites of war.

In the Nazi program of genocide, Jews were the primary victims exterminated not for what they were but for the fact that they were Jews. (In the Nuremberg Decree of 1935, a Jew was defined by his grandparents' affiliation. Even conversion to Christianity did not affect the Nazi definition.) While Gypsies were killed throughout Europe, Nazi plans for their extermination were never completed nor fully implemented. However, Nazi plans for the annihilation of European Jews were not only completed but thoroughly implemented. Many Polish children whose parents were killed were subjected to forced Germanization—that is, adoption by German families and assimilation into German culture—yet Jewish children were offered no such alternative to death.

The Holocaust was not a throwback to medieval torture or archaic barbarism but a thoroughly modern expression of bureaucratic organization, industrial management, scientific achievement, and technological sophistication. The entire apparatus of the German bureaucracy was marshalled in the service of the extermination process. The churches and health ministries supplied birth records to define and isolate Jews; the post office delivered statements of definition, expropriation, denaturalization, and deportation; the economic ministry confiscated Jewish wealth and property; the universities denied Jewish students admission and degrees while dismissing Jewish faculty; German industry fired Jewish workers, officers, board members and disenfranchised Jewish stockholders; government travel bureaus coordinated schedules and billing procedures for the railroads which carried the victims to their deaths.

The process of extermination itself was bureaucratically systematic. Following the mob destruction of *Kristallnacht*, a pogrom in November 1938 in which at least 36 Jews were killed, 20,000 arrested, thousands of Jewish businesses looted and burned, and hundreds of synagogues vandalized, random acts of violence were replaced by organized, passionless operations. Similarly, the angry, riotous actions of the S.A. gave way to the disciplined, professional procedures of the S.S., which by 1943 had substituted massive, impersonal factories of extermination for the earlier mobile killing units. The location and operation of the camps were based on calculations of accessibility and cost-effectiveness, the trademarks of modern business practice. German corporations actually profited from the industry of death. Pharmaceutical firms, unrestricted by fear of side effects, tested drugs on camp inmates, and companies competed for contracts to build ovens or supply gas for extermination. (Indeed, they were even concerned with protecting the patents for their products.) German engineers working for Topf and Sons supplied one camp alone with 46 ovens capable of burning 500 bodies an hour.

Adjacent to the extermination camp at Auschwitz was a privately owned, corporately sponsored concentration camp called I. G. Auschwitz, a division of I. G. Farben. This multi-dimensional, petro-chemical complex brought human slavery to its ultimate perfection by reducing human beings to consumable raw materials, from which all mineral life was systematically drained before the bodies were recycled into the Nazi war economy; gold teeth for the treasury, hair for mattresses, ashes for fertilizer. In their relentless search for the least expensive and most efficient means of extermination, German scientists experimented with a variety of gasses until they discovered the insecticide Zyklon B, which could kill 2,000 persons in less than 30 minutes at a cost of one-half-cent per body. Near the end of the war, in order to cut expenses and save gas, "cost-accountant considerations" led to an order to place living children directly into the ovens or throw them into open burning pits. The same type of ingenuity and control that facilitates modern industrial development was rationally applied to the process of destruction.

During previous centuries, excess populations were alleviated through emigration to less populated regions, but by 1920 the frontiers had receded and the New World no longer absorbed the overflow from the Old. When Germany could not ship out a population she wished to eliminate (no country was willing to accept Jews), she took the next fatal step and sent them up in smoke. In a world of increasing over-population, the inclination to duplicate the Nazi option and once again exterminate millions of people remains a hideous threat. The curse of the Holocaust is a dire warning.

The Holocaust could not have occurred without the collapse of certain religious norms; increasing secularity fueled a devaluation of the image of the human being created in the likeness of God. Ironically, although religious perspectives contributed to the growth of anti-Semitism and the choice of Jews as victims, only in a modern secular age did anti-Semitism lead to annihilation. Other aspects of modern dehumanization contributed to the Holocaust, notably the splitting of the human personality whereby men could murder children by day and be loving husbands and fathers at night. The division of labor that separated complete operations into fractions of the whole permitted thousands to participate in a massive bureaucracy of death without feeling responsible. For example, Adolf Eichmann, who supervised the roundup of Jews for deportation, could claim he never personally killed a single person; employees could insist they did not know what they were doing; executioners could explain they were only following orders.

Whether the product of technology or a reaction against it, the horror of the Holocaust is inextricably linked to the conditions of our time. By studying the Holocaust, we hope to help immunize modern man against the diseases particular to the twentieth century which led to this monstrous aberration.

The Moral Obligation to Remember

The American philosopher George Santayana has warned that those who forget history are condemned to repeat it. The Holocaust reveals a potential pathology at the heart of Western civilization together with the frightening consequences of the total exercise of power. Remembering can instill caution, fortify restraint, and protect against future evil or indifference. The sense of outrage in the face of the Holocaust expressed in the declaration "Never Again"—neither to the Jewish people nor to any other people—must be informed by an understanding of what happened and how.

Although we have no guarantees that those who remember will not repeat history, the failure to remember the past makes repetition more likely. Nothing more clearly illustrates this claim than Hitler's alleged response to those in his government who feared international oposition to genocide. "Who remembers the Armenians?," he asked. Indifference to that earlier twentieth-century attempt at genocide may well have fortified those who later questioned the impact of extermination if not its wisdom or necessity. Conversely, memory can avert future errors. Perhaps it is no accident that the government official most responsible for a fundamental shift in American policy toward the plight of the Jews, former Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., was the son of the Ambassador to Turkey during the Armenian massacre in World War I. It was at the behest of Secretary Morgenthau that a report was prepared for the President on the murder of the Jews.

To remember the Holocaust is to sensitize ourselves to its critical political lessons. Nazism was facilitated by the breakdown of democracy, the collapse of social and economic cohesion, the decline of human solidarity, and an erosion of faith in the political leadership and in the ability of democratic governments to function. Recalling these danger signals intensifies our concern for the health

of the body politic and the processes of democracy, the forms of government, and the importance of human and social values.

By remembering the excesses that marked the Nazi era, we can learn again the importance of limits, of checks and balances. We can also learn that a democratic government must function and perform basic services and that human rights must be protected within the law. We can renew our appreciation for moral and philosophical guidelines, for the need to consider the human cost of scientific experimentation. We can strengthen our belief in inalienable individual rights. We can also come to understand that a universalistic ethic unbalanced by respect for particular variation is ultimately tyrannical. Tolerance for ethnic diversity and pluralism can be enhanced.

But remembering is not easy for either individual or group. Confronting the Holocaust threatens to sear our souls and challenge our perceptions, our complacency. It introduces a tone of somberness and tragedy into human discourse and heightens our awareness of the precariousness and vulnerability of life. Not only has the moral landscape of human reality been altered by the Holocaust, but the acceleration of technology and nuclear power now threaten human existence itself. By focusing on the dangers inherent in the ends and means of a technological, bureaucratic society, study of the Holocaust and its implications can encourage a renewal of commitment to sanity and humanity.

Americans have a distinct responsibility to remember the Holocaust. Millions of our citizens had direct family ties with its victims, our armies liberated many concentration camps and helped rehabilitate their inmates, and many thousands of survivors have since made their homes in this country. On the negative side, although the United States assumed a leadership role in rehabilitation after the war, our failure to provide adequate refuge or rescue until 1944 proved disastrous to millions of Jews.

In a 1944 memo presented to the President, senior officers of the Department of the Treasury accused State Department officials of neglect and acquiescence:

> [State Department officials] have not only failed to use the Government machinery at their disposal to rescue Jews from Hitler, but have even gone so far as to use this Governmental machinery to prevent the rescue of these Jews.
>
> They have not only failed to cooperate with private organizations in the efforts of these organizations to work out individual programs of their own, but have taken steps designed to prevent these programs from being put into effect.
>
> They not only have failed to facilitate the obtaining of information concerning Hitler's plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe but in their official capacity have gone so far as to surreptitiously attempt to stop the obtaining of information concerning the murder of the Jewish population of Europe.
>
> They have tried to cover up their guilt by:
>
> (a) concealment and misrepresentation;
>
> (b) the giving of false and misleading explanations for their failures to act and their attempts to prevent action; and

(c) the issuance of false and misleading statements concerning the "action" which they have taken to date.*

The preceding memo was written at the height of the war, when the industries of death were working 24 hours a day to eliminate European Jewry, yet there was still time to save Hungarian Jews. The document marked a turning-point in American policies toward the Holocaust for it moved the President to appoint the War Refugee Board. Prior to entering the war, the United States had reacted to Nazi atrocities with guarded outrage and quiet diplomacy. Many isolationists had considered the Nazi treatment of Jews a German domestic matter. When emigration was still part of the Nazi approach to the Jewish question, American officials erected paper walls by rigidly enforcing both quota regulations and obscure requirements of the immigration laws so as to minimize the number of persons admitted to our shores. Jewish children were summarily denied admission or any form of preferential treatment. American consular officers demanded that immigration applicants produce certificates of good character from their government at the very time that the Nazis considered Jewishness itself criminal. The American principle of separation of church and state, which blinds our laws to the religious affiliation of individuals, found ironic misapplication. Instead of being recognized as refugees, German Jews were considered citizens of a hostile nation and were thus excluded.

Government conferences on world conditions issued public utterances of displeasure toward the Nazis, but such pronouncements only diffused public pressure, giving the appearance of action rather than substantively altering the situation. The international conference held in 1938 at Evian demonstrated the unwillingness of the nations involved to receive Jews. The United States refused to relax its immigration laws or to borrow on future quotas; Great Britain failed to open the doors of Palestine to immigrants; Canada, Argentina, France, Australia, New Zealand, and Panama were also among 32 nations unwilling to come to the rescue of the victimized Europeans. Ships of refugees seeking haven were turned away from port after port while the Nazis viewed the world's response as tacit compliance if not silent assent to their policies.

Failures of communication included the State Department's closing of secured embassy lines to private organizations, thus blocking the transmission of vital information confirming the existence of extermination camps and the plans to exterminate all the Jews. The State and War Departments displayed no recognition of the fact that the Holocaust was distinct from the general German war effort. Eyewitness accounts, reports from informed sources, and oft-repeated Nazi pledges to exterminate the Jews were not integrated, analyzed and internalized to form a basis of action.

During the work of this Commission, the controversy as to why Auschwitz was not bombed by the Allies was raised once again. Considering the documents that have been made available recently, a more thorough analysis of American policy can now be undertaken. If we are to be responsive to crises in the future, an examination of the errors, the value judgments and reasoning processes that led to decisions may be useful.

America did play a major role in bringing Nazi criminals to justice. Herbert Pell, the United States representative to the War Crimes Commission, was the

*January 13, 1944, "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government to the Murder of the Jews," *Henry Morgenthau Diaries*, Book 693, pp. 212–229, located in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library. This report was later edited and retitled by Secretary Morgenthau, "Personal Report to the President," *Henry Morgenthau Diaries*, Book 694, pp. 194–202.

driving force behind the American assent to charge war criminals with crimes against humanity. The Nuremberg trials represent a new international moral standard for they reflect the conviction that each individual is responsible for his actions even in times of war.

Americans recognized early the need to confront and remember the Holocaust. General Dwight D. Eisenhower insisted that the concentration camps be fully documented and photographed, and General George S. Patton demanded that Germans in surrounding towns be forced to visit the scenes of the Nazis murders. For more than 6 years following the war, American soldiers managed the displaced persons camps, aiding in the suvivors' recovery. These and similar efforts were among the most honorable in our nation's chronicles. Our armed forces witnessed not only the depths of despair and depravity but the resurgence of the human spirit, the yearning to live in freedom.

In reflecting on the Holocaust, we confront not only a collapse in human civilization but also the causes, processes, and consequences of that collapse. As we analyze the American record, we can study our triumphs as well as our failures so as to defeat radical evil and strengthen our democracy.

17

III. PROPOSALS AND PROJECTS: SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of the magnitude of the Holocaust, its scope and the critical issues it raises, the Commission recommends establishment of a living memorial that will speak not only of the victims' deaths but of their lives, a memorial that can transform the living by transmitting the legacy of the Holocaust.

The Commission recommends that the three components of such a living memorial be:

1. *A memorial/museum*
2. *An educational foundation*
3. *A Committee on Conscience*

While a monument alone may commemorate the victims, no structure can fully reveal the process that culminated in extermination; nor can it document the awesome dimensions of the crime or analyze its causes and implications. While no monument in and of itself can speak to the present or inform the future, the Commission does recommend the erection of a physical structure as a setting for a living memorial.

1. National Holocaust Memorial/Museum

The Commission recommends that a National Holocaust Memorial/Museum be erected in Washington, D.C. The museum must be of symbolic and artistic beauty, visually and emotionally moving in accordance with the solemn nature of the Holocaust.

The Commission proposes that the museum become a Federal institution, perhaps an autonomous bureau of the Smithsonian Institution offering extension services to the public, to scholars, and to other institutions.

The museum would present the Holocaust through pictorial accounts, films, and other visual exhibits within a framework that is not merely reportorial but analytic, encouraging reflection and questioning. Furthermore, the museum would provide a fluid medium in which to apply historical events to contemporary complexities; its presentations would not be static but designed to elicit an evolving understanding. Recent technological innovations in computers and information banks now make it possible for museum visitors to become active learners and inquirers.

Museum exhibits would focus on the six million Jews exterminated in the Holocaust and millions of other victims. Changing displays would allow for emphasis on areas of current concern.

Special emphasis would also be placed on the American aspect of the Holocaust—the absence of American response (exclusion of refugees, denials of the Holocaust, etc.), the American liberation of the camps, the reception of survivors after 1945, the lives rebuilt in this country and their contribution to American society and civilization, the development of a new sensitivity to the Holocaust, and the growing respect for the multi-ethnic, multi-dimensional aspects of American culture. Also incorporated would be the life and culture of the victims and not just the destruction process. Similarly, the museum would depict the extraordinary efforts to preserve human dignity and life during the Holocaust, the heroic resistance efforts, and the response of renewed life after the Event.

The museum would house a library, an archive of Holocaust materials, computer linkage to existing centers of Holocaust documentation, and a reference staff. Such facilities would enable both the general public and specialized scholars to study the record of the Holocaust. Conference rooms, a lecture hall, and audiovisual equipment would also be provided.

While the Commission has reached no specific conclusions as to the exact programmatic content of the museum—such conclusions await the creative imagination of designers, planners, and architects working in cooperation with scholars and survivors—it has formulated guidelines for the substantive themes to be conveyed.

Life as Well as Death: The museum is to treat the existence and culture of the Jews of Europe before and during the war, their religious practices, their social and political convictions, and their economic character as well as the cultures of other peoples exterminated by the Nazis in order to recreate a vision of the world that was lost.

The Universal and the Particular: The Jews were Hitler's primary victims against whom the total fury of the Holocaust was unleashed: to dilute or deny this reality would be to falsify it in the name of misguided universalism. Since Jews were not the only people to suffer and since others perished for their convictions or affiliations, for their nationality or race in the machinery of death initially designed for the destruction of Jews, the Commission recommends that the museum incorporate displays on the Poles, the Gypsies, and other exterminated groups. Similarly, the museum should speak of the heroic individuals and groups of many nations who risked their freedom and their lives to save Jews from arrest and extermination—*e.g.*, the Danish people whose noble efforts resulted in the rescue of 92 percent of the Jewish population of Denmark, and of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat assigned to Hungary who saved 30,000 Hungarian Jews. The breakdown of human solidarity must also be presented, the betrayals, the failure of some underground movements to provide arms for resistance, the collaboration of some local populations with the Germans to isolate and execute Jews, and the cooperation of leadership.

The universal implications of the Holocaust challenge Western civilization and modern, scientific culture. What threatened one people in the past could recur to threaten another people or, indeed, all humanity.

The American Experience: Since the museum is to be a national institution, it should deal with the American role during World War II. This includes

American accomplishments, such as the War Refugee Board which saved thousands, the military successes that led to liberation of the concentration camps, the reception of suvivors, and the support for a Jewish homeland; but it must also confront our nation's failures. The museum should deal, for example, with the inability of people to believe that the Holocaust was happening or to translate information into effective action.

An Understanding of the Holocaust: The museum should trace the roles of the bystanders as well as the perpetrators and victims, delving into such issues as the collapse of the Weimar Republic, the rise of Nazism, the reasons for the choice of the Jew as principal victim. It should elucidate the mechanisms of social control and psychological manipulation perfected by the Nazis.

Location: The Commission resolved that the memorial should be built in Washington, D.C., the capital of the country and the seat of government, for the materials to be presented by it affect all Americans, raising fundamental questions about government, the abuses of unbridled power, the fragility of social institutions, the need for national unity, and the functioning of government. By reminding us of the potential for violence in human society, the museum can contribute to a strengthening of the democratic processes.

Model: When the Commission inquired as to an appropriate location for the memorial within the framework of current governmental activities, an independent institution and/or autonomous bureau of the Smithsonian Institution were presented as possible models. In addition to offering displays, the memorial/museum could parallel other services offered by the Smithsonian and other Federally sponsored institutions. For example, the plan to sponsor curricula development and other educational programs (see page 12) might be analogous to those of the Alliance for Education in the Arts, a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts which offers school systems throughout the nation a wide variety of outreach programs. The archival resources proposed for the memorial/museum could, like the Kennedy Center library, be linked to the Library of Congress and thus be enabled to provide research facilities and informational retrieval systems servicing both the casual student and the serious scholar. Like the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, another bureau of the Smithsonian, the memorial might also become a center of learning hosting conferences and stimulating Holocaust-related research. In the manner of the National Gallery of Art, it could also assist local museums and resource centers throughout the country in planning and developing Holocaust presentations. The relationship between institutions and the memorial/museum would be one of cooperation and mutual nourishment, with the national center playing a central cooperative role.

An association with the Smithsonian Institution either as an autonomous bureau or in a cooperative working relationship is desirable by virtue of a shared concern. Dedicated to the diffusion of knowledge among men, its various divisions celebrate the triumphant achievements of human history and creativity: the evolution of the human species (The National Museum of Natural History), the increasing human control of environment (The National Museum of History and Technology), the aesthetic genius of the human imagination (The National Collection of Fine Arts and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden), and the extension of the boundaries of human civilization to the skies and outer space (The National Air and Space Museum).

If the present branches of the Smithsonian represent the accomplishments of civilization, the Holocaust illuminates an alternate dimension of human experience, as well as the power of life to resist and renew itself. The Holocaust

raises basic questions about human nature and its capacity for evil. The fact that this process of destruction was committed by one of the most cultured and technogically advanced societies adds a somber dimension to the progress of humanity celebrated by the Smithsonian. The connection of the memorial/museum with the various parts of the Smithsonian would allow the presentation of a more complete picture of civilization, a greater vision of its promises and dangers.

2. *Educational Foundation*

The Commission recommends that there be included as part of a Holocaust memorial an Educational Foundation dedicated to the pursuit of educational work through grants, extension services, joint projects, research and exploration of issues raised by the Holocaust for all areas of human knowledge and public policy.

The Foundation should stimulate and support such work in all sections of the country within existing programs, both academic and educational, as well as within the network of institutions that deal with the Holocaust. The Educational Foundation should also assist with the development of appropriate curricula and resource material while working cooperatively with those school systems which wish to implement the study of the Holocaust. The Washington center would function also as a clearinghouse for the exchange of information.

To implement the conviction of the Commission that the study of the Holocaust become part of the curriculum in every school system in the country, the Foundation should include various support systems, financial aid, evaluation of Holocaust courses presently offered in public and private schools, consortia, conferences, teacher-training workshops, and summer institutes for educators and scholars.

In the area of higher education, the Foundation should make available to scholars and graduate students fellowships for research and travel as well as matching grants for institutions or faculty who work with students. Other activities to be coordinated by the Educational Foundation would involve project funding, translations into English of important works in many languages and a visiting faculty program.

The Commission recommends that a publishing program be part of the Educational Foundation, with priority given to out-of-print classics, new works of special merit, survivors' accounts, and documentary or photographic publication. Emphasis should also be placed on scholarly studies which are essential to an understanding of the Holocaust but which are not commercially viable.

Finally, in recognition of the powerful educational role of the media, the Foundation should offer development grants and prizes for work in the arts, literature, and the media.

Because of the Commission's conviction that the teaching of the Holocaust is a critical dimension of the living memorial, the Educational Foundation is proposed to complement the museum by helping and encouraging the introduction of the study of the Holocaust in junior and senior high schools and universities, as well as by stimulating the development of resources for such teaching and study. Further, the Educational Foundation would encourage research on the Holocaust and promote the interaction of scholars and educators.

The Educational Foundation would confine itself to developmental and supportive functions. Standard history and other textbooks can be encouraged to deal with the Holocaust as a substantive part of their treatment of World War II.

Teacher-training is another major area for the Educational Foundation, a need intensified by the growth in the number of colleges and secondary schools teaching the Holocaust. Within the past 5 years, course offerings have increased fifty-fold, and it is estimated that by 1985 over a thousand school systems will offer specific courses. While the subject of the Holocaust is now handled on the college level within a variety of departments—literature, history, philosophy, religion, psychology, and sociology—there is only one graduate program in Holocaust studies anywhere in the United States: Temple University, which offers a Ph.D. in religion with a specialty in the Holocaust. Many university and high school teachers assigned to teach the Holocaust courses would profit from more adequate preparation.

The availability of teaching resources during this sensitive stage in the development of Holocaust studies could have a beneficial effect on the projects undertaken and help set standards in the field. New materials could be widely disseminated.

While the growing interest in the Holocaust has evoked the publication of scores of new books in recent years, research funds are still very scarce. Through its financial support, the Foundation could stimulate research and publications in the field. Through its archive and library facilities, equipped with information retrieval systems, it could facilitate access to scholarly material from centers throughout the world.

The Commission recommends that the Foundation also be charged with funding oral history projects of survivors living in America as well as of American soldiers who helped liberate concentration camps. This uniquely American aspect of the Holocaust will be lost with the passage of time and the death of those witnesses if such projects are not initiated soon. While some attempts have been made,—*e.g.*, the oral history projects of the Center for Holocaust Studies, Emory University and the American Jewish Committee—these undertakings have been handicapped by limited resources and the absence of a coordinating repository for materials.

The Foundation could also sponsor or co-sponsor social science research on the effects of trauma on survivors and their children. It might also commission musical or artistic activities relating to the Holocaust and offer creative input to improve the quality of media presentations on the Holocaust.

3. *Committee on Conscience*

The Commission recommends that a Committee on Conscience composed of distinguished moral leaders in America be appointed. This Committee would receive reports of genocide (actual or potential) anywhere in the world. In the event of any outbreak, it would have access to the President, the Congress, and the public in order to alert the national conscience, influence policy makers, and stimulate worldwide action to bring such acts to a halt.

Of all the issues addressed by the Commission, none was as perplexing or as urgent as the need to insure that such a totally inhuman assault as the Holocaust—or any partial version thereof—never recurs. The Commission was bur-

dened by the knowledge that 35 years of post-Holocaust history testify to how little has been learned. Only a conscious, concerted attempt to learn from past errors can prevent recurrence to any racial, religious, ethnic, or national group. A memorial unresponsive to the future would also violate the memory of the past.

In the years following the Holocaust, Americans repeatedly explained: "We didn't know. We didn't understand the magnitude of the problem. If only we had known, something would have been done." Trusting in the moral responsiveness of the American people and other peoples throughout the world, the Commission feels that the task now is to combat silence and ignorance; if evil cannot be totally eliminated, it may at least be alleviated.

The Commission recognizes that genocide has both a legal and political definition. It knows well the potential for the politicization of a Committee on Conscience, but the risks are worth taking if such a body can provide maximal exposure for dangerous developments, raising, in one scholar's words, an "institutional scream" to alert the conscience of the world and spark public outcry. Open hearings could be instituted in the event of major offenses against peoples, so that early reports of atrocities would not be suppressed, as they were between 1941 and 1943.

The Committee on Conscience would not duplicate the roles of existing human rights agencies, whether national or international, but would concentrate upon genocidal situations, transmitting information and advocating strong action on the part of the United States, other countries, or the United Nations.

To explore the potential for preventive action, as an example, the Chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust traveled to Argentina this summer to witness first-hand the massive human rights violations that have been reported. Because of regretable State Department unresponsiveness, the scope of the Chairman's contacts were limited. Valuable information, however, was obtained.

The Boat People further illustrate the unique role that the Committee on Conscience can play. Speaking for the Commission, the Chairman appealed directly to the President of the United States to intervene on their behalf. He was also named to the delegation at the international conference at Geneva, in which role he was able to help bring about international relief activities. This is not to presume that the Commission is or would be the lone voice to redress an outrage; the media, by the persistence of its reporting, has continually focused attention on the plight of the Boat People. Yet the voices which spoke out of the experience of the Holocaust resonated with special authenticity. By being reminded of Evian (a conference of 32 nations held in 1938 that failed to rescue the Jews when Hitler flung that challenge in the world's face), the recent Geneva Conference on the Boat People was sensitized to the price of inaction. Because of the Administration's awareness of the failures of the past, the Vice President's somber address invoking the spectre of Evian commanded great urgency. He said:

> Our children will deal harshly with us if we fail. The conference at Evian 41 years ago took place amidst the same comfort and beauty we enjoy at our own deliberations today. One observer at those proceedings—moved by the contrast between the setting and the task—said this:
>
> "These poor people and these great principles seem so far away. To one who has attended other conferences on Lake Geneva, the most

striking thing on the eve of this one is that the atmosphere is so much like the others."

Let us not be like the others. Let us renounce that legacy of shame. Let us reach beyond metaphor. Let us honor the moral principles we inherit. Let us do something meaningful—something profound—to stem this misery. We face a world problem. Let us fashion a world solution.

History will not forgive us if we fail. History will not forget us if we succeed.

4. *Days of Remembrance*

The Commission recommends that the Days of Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust be proclaimed in perpetuity to be held annually, commencing on the Sunday of (or preceding) the internationally recognized Holocaust Commemoration Day.

The Commission further recommends that the Holocaust Memorial be charged in its charter with the continuing responsibility to develop means of commemorating the Days of Remembrance. This mandate is integral to the work of the proposed Holocaust Memorial.

The President charged the Commission to implement the Congressional resolution calling for the observance of April 28 and 29, 1979, as "Days of Remembrance." The authors wanted the observance "to occur on days when Americans worship in the churches and synagogues of the nation, to coincide with the internationally recognized Holocaust Commemoration Day, and to mark the anniversary of a significant American involvement in the Holocaust, namely, the liberation of Dachau by American troops." Mindful of the legislative intent and the task of commemorating events so shattering as to defy description, the Commission extended the commemoration to a week-long period so as to include the internationally recognized Holocaust Commemoration Day.

The programs initiated by the Commission were built on the foundation of two decades of commemoration activities, intensified this year by governmental involvement. Given the limited resources of the Commission, the number of activities were restricted to those capable of providing models for future years. Working on its own and in cooperation with several states, communities, and national organizations, the Commission organized the following activities:

1. National Civic Holocaust Commemoration Service in the Capitol Rotunda. President Carter led the leaders of the nation and invited guests in a memorial service that included music from the Holocaust sung by the Atlanta Boy Choir, a Presidential address, remarks by the Vice President, an address by the Chairman of the Commission, a candle-lighting ceremony, and appropriate prayers.

2. In the State of Minnesota, a model for state observances, with the help of the local community and the state leaders, programs included:
   a. An exhibit of Holocaust art in the Interchurch Center of Minnesota.
   b. A conference and teacher workshop, featuring Professor Raul Hilberg as the keynote speaker and scholar in residence, on "The Implications of the Holocaust for Western Society."
   c. A state civic ceremony similar to the national ceremony, held in the state capitol with an address by the Governor and a Commissioner.

d. An ecumenical Christian service of commemoration with the participation of all major Christian churches.

e. A Jewish service of commemoration with the participation of all the local synagogues of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

f. A series of documentaries and Holocaust films shown statewide on public and network television.

3. Other Activities: Similar statewide activities were held in Connecticut and New Jersey with a member of the Commission or its Advisory Board participating in the services at the state capitols.

The Commission also participated in the largest Holocaust commemoration service in North America held annually in New York City, organized by the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization and sponsored by other survivors' organizations. Over 25,000 people attended.

The Commission also joined in a Holocaust commemoration service at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., at which Senator John Danforth, an ordained Episcopal minister, was the guest preacher. A special liturgy and litany were composed for the occasion which was shared with all Episcopal ministers throughout the United States.

As a model for future observances, the Commission has worked with the City of Sommerville, Massachusetts, on a series of commemorative and educational assemblies in its high schools, featuring films and talks by survivors. The Commission also assisted the National Educational Television network with the selection of appropriate documentary films related to the Holocaust for broadcast throughout the commemorative week.

The Commission's views regarding the Days of Remembrance directly reflect this year's experience. Foremost among its proposals is that these days become a part of the national calendar. The international Holocaust commemoration day falls on the 27th of Nisan by the lunar calendar, a date that never conflicts with either Easter or Passover; the week of Remembrance should begin on the preceding Sabbath.

5. Additional Recommendations

The following recommendations for governmental action are offered by the Commission as appropriate forms of remembering the victims of the Holocaust:

a. Ratification of the Genocide Convention:

The Commission joins with the President of the United States in urging the Senate to ratify the Genocide Convention.

The Genocide Convention itself was the outgrowth of the worldwide moral revulsion upon the revelation of the full enormity of the Holocaust. The Commission believes that the knowledge that perpetrators will be held responsible for the crime of genocide can play some role in preventing such acts in the future. Moreover, the punishment of criminals involved in the genocidal activities of World War II was criticized on the grounds that genocide was not recognized as a crime by international law prior to 1939.

b. Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals in America:

The Commission recommends direct governmental intervention to:

1) *Assure high priority to the investigation and, if warranted, prosecution of Nazi war criminals in America.*
2) *Insure adequate funds and staffing for the Office of Special Investigator charged with the prosecution of accused Nazi war criminals in our midst.*
3) *Assign experienced trial lawyers to the prosecution staff.*
4) *Insist that government agencies render accessible all relevant records and testimony.*
5) *Exert diplomatic influence to assure the cooperation of other governments in obtaining materials pertaining to ongoing investigations and trials of alleged Nazi war criminals.*

Since the end of World War II, more than 200 individuals accused of direct complicity in genocide and other Nazi crimes have lived in the United States, free from prosecution or deportation in cases where their American citizenship was obtained by fraud or denial of their past record. The allegation that some of these criminals found refuge and employment under the auspices of various U.S. agencies lends dramatic emphasis to the moral necessity for finally resolving this issue.

The Commission has viewed with gratitude recent steps taken by the Congress and the Executive Branch to rectify these situations. It wishes to underscore the historical importance of this quest for justice.

c. *Jewish Cemeteries Abroad:*

The Commission recommends that in recognition of the sanctity of the physical remains of the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe and the right of the dead to a final resting place, the State Department should continue to express its concern over the destruction of cemeteries, urging that they be maintained in a suitably respectable manner.

One of the few remnants of Jewish life in Eastern Europe are the cemeteries. In recent years, the cemeteries have been destroyed by new building projects, housing developments, and road construction. The Commission strongly urges that pressure be brought to prevent vandalization, to repair markers or to supply markers where they are missing, and to maintain grounds.

F. *Funding*

The Commission concludes that the proposed physical memorial/museum to the Holocaust with its educational foundation is achievable.

The Commission recommends that financial support be provided through a public-private partnership involving government participation and private fund-raising, employing the model of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and other major memorials. The Federal Government would provide seed money (up to $1 million) for the broad design of facilities and program plus a challenge grant to be matched in the private sector over a 3-year period.

The Commission respectfully requests the direct moral support, endorsement, and involvement of the White House in this effort.

The sources of funds for establishing and maintaining the Holocaust memorial and its programs can include large individual contributors, foundations, associations, institutions, corporations, civic organizations, churches, and

synagogues as well as voluntary contributions from Americans in all walks of life throughout the country.

In accordance with the President's guidelines and in the light of the universal significance of the Holocaust, the Commission holds that funding for the memorial should be realized principally through public subscription. Despite the size of the project, the Commission believes that it can receive extensive public support.

While financial support may be largely non-governmental, issues raised by the Holocaust are so fundamentally tied to public policy that funding of the memorial must involve a national effort. The Commission deems Federal participation crucial to the mobilization and channeling of public concern.

A land grant and governmental status would symbolize Federal commitment while leaving the major responsibility for funding and initiative to the American people through the private sector, as was the case in the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars or the National Gallery of Art. The dialectic of a government-private partnership, a national center with grass-roots programming, and an academic endeavor with ethical exploration would in itself be an extraordinary cultural and political model.

Funds will be needed for the museum/memorial, for endowing or capitalizing both continuing programs and one-time building costs, and for the acquisition and computerization of scholarly archives. Cost estimates will depend on many factors to be considered by the successor body to the Commission. It is intended that these funds will be raised primarily by private contributions supplemented by a land grant and challenge grants from the Federal Government.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
EXECUTIVE ORDER

ORDER No. 12093

THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

By virtue of the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution of the United States of America, and in order to create, in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. I), an advisory committee on the establishment of a memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1–1. *Establishment and Membership.*

1–101. There is established the President's Commission on the Holocaust.

1–102. The Commission shall consist of not more than thirty-four members as follows:

(a) The President shall appoint twenty-four members of the Commission and shall designate one of these members to chair the Commission.

(b) The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate are each invited to designate five members of their respective Houses to serve as members of the Commission.

1–2. *Functions of the Commission.*

1–201. The Commission shall submit a report to the President and the Secretary of the Interior containing its recommendations with respect to the establishment and maintenance of an appropriate memorial to those who perished in the Holocaust.

1–202. The Commission's report shall examine the feasibility of obtaining funds for creation and maintenance of the Memorial through contributions by the American people.

1–203. The Commission shall recommend appropriate ways for the nation to commemorate April 28 and 29, 1979, which the Congress has resolved shall be "Days of Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust."

1–3. *Administrative Provisions.*

1–301. To the extent permitted by law, the Secretary of the Interior shall provide all necessary administrative services, facilities, support, and funds necessary for the performance of the Commission's functions.

1–302. Each member of the Commission who is not otherwise employed in the Government may receive compensation for each day such member is engaged in the work of the Commission at a daily rate to be determined by the Secretary of the Interior. Such rate shall not exceed that payable pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

1–303. Members of the Commission shall be entitled to travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law (5 U.S.C. 5702 and 5703) for persons in the Government service employed intermittently.

1–304. The functions of the President under the Federal Advisory Committee Act which are applicable to the Commission, except that of reporting to the Congress, shall be performed by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with

guidelines and procedures prescribed by the Administrator of General Services.

1–4. *Final Report and Termination*

1–401. The Commission shall submit its final report to the President and the Secretary of the Interior not later than six months from the date of its first meeting.

1–402. The Commission shall terminate not later than thirty days after submitting its final report.

JIMMY CARTER

THE WHITE HOUSE,
November 1, 1978.

APPENDIX B
STUDY MISSION TO EASTERN EUROPE, DENMARK AND ISRAEL

On July 29, 1979, 57 members of the Commission and Advisory Board, their spouses, and special consultants to the Commission departed on a 14-day working mission to study memorials and museums to the victims of the Holocaust, to visit sites of destruction, and to meet with government leaders and directors of institutions whose commitments and undertakings parallel the work of this Commission. Traveling at their own expense to Poland, the U.S.S.R., Denmark and Israel, the group confronted the past and its commemoration to further inform the Commission's recommendations.

In Warsaw the Commission began its agenda with a ceremony at the site of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Tribute was also paid to the Polish losses during the war at the Nike Monument for the general Warsaw uprising, followed by a series of meetings with Polish officials. At a session with the Minister of Justice, the painful and critical issues of justice and truth were explored—justice to those who perpetrated the crime, and truth in understanding the roles of criminal, victim, and bystander. An exchange of Polish and American documents was discussed, and a tour conducted of Polish archives which included critical documents and photographs, Nazi manuals and albums. In the evening the Commission attended a performance by a remnant of the Jewish theater of Warsaw. The performance was a lyrical and musical interpretation of Chagall's paintings, spoken and sung in Yiddish, a language understood by few of the actors. Heavily subsidized by the Polish government, this troupe recalls the great theatrical tradition of the Yiddish stage.

The following morning the Commission traveled to Treblinka, the site of an extermination camp at which some 800,000 Jews were killed. (Unlike Auschwitz, Treblinka was restricted to Jews.) The camp was destroyed near the end of the war as the Nazis tried to eradicate all traces of their crime. The Polish government has built an extraordinary monument on the now-wooded site of Treblinka, a total environment of remembrance. Identical slabs of stone, suggesting railroad ties, lead the visitor to the center of the camp where two enormous stone forms stand separated only by a narrow opening. A shattered menorah is engraved near the top of the stone monument, and, on all sides, stretching as far as one can see, are hundreds of rough-hewn, jagged stones of various shapes and sizes, each inscribed with the name of a Jewish community obliterated during the Holocaust. Beyond the central monument, a flat, rectangular representation of charred and disfigured bones is set in a long ditch to symbolize the burned pyres of those who were gassed. The power of this unforgetable sculpture at Treblinka convinced the Commission of the importance of a monument.

Throughout the journey in Eastern Europe, members of the delegation shared their impressions and their anguish. A scholar explained the relationship between the geographic location of a camp and its proximity to a population center; a survivor recollected a wartime experience—stories were told of betrayal and torture, anxiety and loss, desperation and agony, and some of hope and rescue.

On the third day the Commission traveled to Auschwitz, the largest and without doubt the most lethal of all extermination camps. Auschwitz contained persons from every country and nationality controlled by the Axis. In addition to Jews, most especially Poles, Soviet prisoners of war, Frenchmen, Serbs, Slavs,

and Gypsies were killed at Auschwitz. An enormous railroad complex was located at the entrance to the camp; and the still sturdy brick construction of the barracks attest to its intended function as a continuing institution of subjugation and liquidation. Only with great difficulty could the survivors of Auschwitz in the delegation re-enter the infamous camp, seeing the walls, the electrified barbed wire, the torture chambers, the hospital for medical experiments, and the gas chambers where their loved ones had been put to death. A few kilometers away, at Birkenau, words of prayer were recited, wreaths laid, and spirituals sung, yet all attempts to speak seemed inadequate.

The visit to Poland was concluded by a series of meetings with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Polish Academy of Science, the Janusz Korczak Committee, the Ministry of Monuments, the Combatants Organization, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the curators of the Museum at Auschwitz and the Jewish Museum in Warsaw. Everywhere the need to remember the Holocaust was discussed and the groundwork laid for future cooperation between the American and Polish governments, including the exchange of archival information and scholarship, educational resources for teaching, films, and publications. A number of Polish documentaries on the Holocaust were also viewed. The Commission was pleased by the general interest and encouragement it encountered and by the mutual commitment to remember.

Before leaving Poland, the Commission visited the Jewish cemetery in Warsaw, the burial place for over one-half-million Jews who died in Warsaw in the centuries preceding the liquidation of the ghetto. Seven hundred years of Polish Jewish culture are represented by the graves of scholars and rabbis, writers, teachers, political leaders, artists, scientists, and actors. An empty field devoid of any marker is the mass grave of some 150,000 Polish Jews who perished from starvation or disease during the war before the ghetto was destroyed. The general neglect of the cemetery—disrepair and vandalization—disturbed the Commission, and our concerns were expressed to the appropriate authorities.

The Commission traveled from Poland to the Soviet Union, first visiting Kiev in the Ukraine where 100,000 people were massacred by the Nazis at Babi Yar. Beginning on the first day of the Jewish New Year in 1941 and continuing for 10 days until the Day of Atonement, 80,000 Jews were brought to Babi Yar and killed there within earshot of downtown Kiev. The monument is most impressive, set in the center of a ravine where the victims were buried. However, in both content and inscription the memorial is devoid of any reference, direct or oblique, to the fact that Jews were killed at Babi Yar. Shocked by this conspicuous omission, the Commission was alerted to the danger of historical falsification or dilution.

In Moscow the Commission met with the National Archivist, the Writer's Guild, the Soviet Academy of Sciences, the Institute of the History of World War II, the Deputy Minister of Culture, the War Veterans' Organization, and the Solicitor General to explore the difficulties of writing about the Holocaust, of sensitizing people to pain and suffering without feeling a sense of morbidity, encouraging despair, or developing an immunity to pain. Furthermore, discussions were conducted pertaining to archival exchange and scholarly interchange. In a meeting with Solicitor General, Roman Rudenko, the Commission addressed the trials of Nazi war criminals. (Mr. Rudenko was the chief prosecutor of Nuremberg.) Before leaving Moscow, the Commission placed a wreath at the Soviet Union's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

For its last stop in Europe, the Commission traveled to Denmark to present a scroll of tribute to the Danish people and their government. The scroll reads

as follows:

In tribute to the Danish people and their government whose actions during the Holocaust served as a moral beacon of light in a world of total darkness. Your noble behavior has illuminated the moral landscape of humanity. May your deeds serve as a reminder of courage and human solidarity to a world still desperately in need of such lessons.

In casual conversation with our American delegation and in formal declarations, our Danish hosts frequently repeated that they had done nothing extraordinary or heroic in saving Jews and protecting their property. One Dane who is an accountant explained that he needs no congratulations for having refused to embezzle funds from his Jewish compatriots. When compared to the total cooperation of the entire Nazi economic ministry in the confiscation of Jewish holdings, the Danish humility toward their responsibility and their integrity was striking. During the Holocaust, ordinary, decent behavior became the extraordinary.

That there were great acts of courage in those dark times is indisputable. In Denmark, the Commission presented a scroll of honor in absentia to Raoul Wallenberg, a junior diplomat in the Swedish legation in Hungary, who coordinated a large-scale rescue operation during the war in which 30,000 lives were saved. Among many daring and innovative moves, Wallenberg rented buildings and flew the Swedish flag above them to declare them part of the Swedish Embassy, thus granting diplomatic protection to the inhabitants. He also issued Swedish passports to thousands of Jews in Budapest to prevent their deportation. Wallenberg was taken prisoner by the liberating Russian armies immediately after the war, and neither his presence in Russian prisons nor his fate have been satisfactorily clarified. (The Russian government produced a death certificate indicating that Wallenberg died in jail in 1947, but his death remains unconfirmed, and reports of his alleged whereabouts circulate periodically, as recently as last year.) The scroll presented to Wallenberg reads as follows:

In tribute to Raoul Wallenberg, a man of rare daring and imagination, whose deeds saved thirty-thousand Jews in Budapest. His heroism and character have shown the world what could have been done and what should have been done. His compassion and courage will be remembered forever. For his actions, he paid with his freedom, if not with his life. This scroll is presented to his sister in his absence though conscious of his presence.

The Commission also toured the Museum of Danish Rescue and Resistance in Copenhagen.

The final leg of the trip brought the Commission to Israel where it visited Yad Vashem, the Israeli National Remembrance Authority in its capital, Jerusalem, consisting of a museum, memorial and sculpture garden, archives, documentation center, research facilities, and educational resources. The Commission met with the leaders of Yad Vashem and working subcommittees of the Commission met with staff of the institution, and with prominent Israeli scholars who shared the fruits of their vast experience. The Commission was deeply impressed by the achievements of Yad Vashem and felt that close cooperation—a special relationship—with the Commission's successor body must be established.

The Commission also visited the Museum of the Diaspora, to examine its treatment of the Holocaust and use of modern media and display techniques, computer learning, and engaging presentations. Having visited Warsaw, the

Commission included in its itinerary the Warsaw Ghetto Fighters' Memorial at a kibbutz in the Galilee founded by survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The kibbutz also houses a museum on the Holocaust. The Commission visited Mashuah, an experimental education institution designed to teach the Holocaust to both adolescents and adults through creative curricula, seminars, films, and educational materials. The delegation was also welcomed at Nes Ammim, a moshav founded by Dutch Christians and dedicated to atonement for the Holocaust. The Commission's work in Israel concluded with a meeting with the President of Israel at his home.

During its mission abroad, the Commission was able to secure or explore access to more archival records and documents for research on the Holocaust, for the memorial/museum envisioned, and for the prosecution of Nazi war criminals. The Commission learned from the examples of other Holocaust museums and memorials, and arranged for cooperation between other countries and the American endeavor. Finally, the trip itself, its meetings, and its ceremonies on behalf of the dead served as part of the living memorial which shall continue to bring the memory of the Holocaust and its implications to public consciousness.

APPENDIX C
ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER

Made at the
National Civil Holocaust
Commemoration Ceremony
April 24, 1979
United States Capitol Rotunda
Washington, D.C.

I am honored and also grave and solemn as I participate in this ceremony during Days of Remembrance for victims of the Holocaust.

Just five weeks ago, during my trip to Israel, I visited again Yad Vashem—the memorial to the six million. I walked slowly through the Hall of Names. And like literally millions before me, I grieved as I looked at book after book, row after row, each recording the name of a man or a woman, a little boy or a little girl, each one a victim of the Holocaust.

I vowed then—as people all over the world are doing this week—to reaffirm our unshakeable commitment that such an event will never recur on this earth again.

A philosopher has written that language itself breaks down when one tries to speak about the Holocaust and its meaning. Our words pale before the frightening spectacle of human evil which was unleashed upon the world, and before the awesomeness of the suffering involved; the sheer weight of its numbers—11 million innocent victims exterminated—6 million of them Jews.

Although words do pale, yet we must speak. We must strive to understand. We must teach the lessons of the Holocaust. And most of all, we ourselves must remember.

We must learn not only about the vulnerability of life, but of the value of human life. We must remember the terrible price paid for bigotry and hatred and also the terrible price paid for indifference and for silence.

It is fitting also that we recall today the persecution, the suffering and the destruction which has befallen so many other people in this century, in many nations, peoples whose representatives have joined us for this observance. For the central lesson of the Holocaust must be that, in the words of the poet, "Each man's death diminishes me."

To truly commemorate the victims of the Holocaust, we must harness the outrage of our memories to banish all human oppression from the world. We must recognize that when any fellow human being is stripped of humanity; when any person is turned into an object of repression; tortured or defiled or victimized by terrorism or prejudice or racism, then all human beings are victims, too.

The world's failure to recognize the moral truth 40 years ago permitted the Holocaust to proceed. Our generation—the generation of survivors—will never permit the lesson to be forgotten. Human rights and human dignity are indi-

visible. America must, and always will, speak out in the defense of human rights not only in our own country, but around the world.

That commitment imposes special responsibilities on us to uphold the highest possible standards of human justice and human rights here at home. I applaud the Congress in calling for this day of remembrance of the Holocaust. And I renew my call to the Senate to take a long overdue step this year by ratifying the International Treaty on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. Without concrete action, our words are hollow. Let us signify by deed as well as by word that the American people will never forget.

It is, perhaps, ironic that we meet today in a season of rebirth and renewal to recall a time of darkness and destruction that has no parallel in human history. And yet it is also fitting that we do so in this Rotunda, along with actual survivors of the Holocaust itself. For the Holocaust is also a story of renewal and a testament to the power of the human spirit to prevail.

People who saw their homes destroyed helped build a new homeland in the State of Israel. People like Elie Wiesel, the Chairman of my Holocaust Commission, who witnessed the collapse of all vision, created and shared with us a new vision. It is an incredible story of a people who refused to allow despair to triumph, who after having lost their children, brought new families into the world.

It is our collective task as well to learn from this process of renewal, the roots of hope—a hope not based on illusion or ignorance, but hope grounded in the rebirth of the human spirit and a reaffirmation of the sacredness of life.

With that hope, we will strive to build out of our memories of the Holocaust a world joined by a true fellowship of human understanding, a world of tolerance and diversity in which all peoples can live in dignity and in peace.

APPENDIX D
REMARKS MADE BY VICE PRESIDENT WALTER F. MONDALE

Made at the
National Civic Holocaust
Commemoration Ceremony
April 24, 1979
United States Capitol Rotunda
Washington, D.C.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Majority Leader, Members of Congress, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am profoundly honored to join you, and all Americans, as we commemorate both the tragedy of the Holocaust, and the vibrant resilience of the human spirit.

Human nature casts a complex shadow on the history of civilization. The triumph of the human heart has its memorials—in our miracles of art, in the genius of our democracies, in the lesson of compassion at the soul of all religions.

But the history of humanity is also scarred by ignominy. Hatred, injustice, oppression, bloodshed: these, too, have their monuments that litter our nobler history like trash in a garden.

We meet today to recall both sides of human history—triumph as well as tragedy. We meet both to renew our grief, and to recommit our courage—to say Kaddish for the fallen, and to sanctify as well the work of the living.

The Holocaust beggars the human imagination. To recall it is to think the unthinkable. To describe it is to say the unsayable. To be its heir is to inherit a nightmare.

But the horror we commemorate today must not blind us to the life whose roots lie in its ashes. For today we also affirm that genocide has no part in human history. Today we declare that decency and dignity and life itself are inalienable, and must forever remain so. Today we bear witness not only to the unanswered cries of the eleven million, but also to the duty they confer on us: the duty to banish bloodshed from the annals of our children's future.

Today we bear witness. Elie Wiesel, the distinguished Chairman of President Carter's Holocaust Commission, put it this way in his moving novel, *The Oath*:

> "We must tell, awaken, alert, and repeat over and over again without respite or pause, repeat to the very end those stories that have no end . . ."

We will repeat those stories without end. One of them is the tragedy of the Holocaust. But another—and just as important—is the story of the human heart in its relentless service of high ideals.

APPENDIX E
THE HOLOCAUST: BEGINNING OR END?

Remarks Made by
Elie Wiesel
Chairman
President's Commission on the Holocaust
Made at the
National Civic Holocaust
Commemoration Ceremony
April 24, 1979
United States Capitol Rotunda
Washington, D.C.

Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, Mr. Speaker, Leaders and Members of the House and the Senate, Distinguished Guests:

Allow me to tell you a story.

Once upon a time, far away, somewhere in the Carpathian mountains, there lived a small boy, a Jewish boy, whose dreams were filled with God, prayer, and song.

Then one day, he and his family, and all the Jews of his town, were rounded up and exiled to a dark and evil kingdom. They arrived there at midnight. Then came the first separation, the first selection.

As the boy stood with his father, wondering whether his mother and sisters would come back, an inmate came to tell them the truth; this road led to the final destination of the Jewish people; the truth was there: in the fire, the ashes, the truth was in death. And the young boy refused to believe him; it had to be a lie, a nightmare perhaps, this could not be happening, not here, not now, not in the heart of civilized Europe, not in the middle of the twentieth-century. "Father," said the boy: "if this were true, the world would not be silent. . . ." "Perhaps the world does not know," said the father. And father and son walked on, part of an eerie nocturnal procession, toward mysterious flames of darkness.

Thirty-five years later—almost to the day—the same Jewish boy stands before you with a deep sense of privilege, to remind our contemporaries that in those times of anguish and destruction, only one people—the Jewish people—were totally, inexplicably abandoned—only one people were simply, cynically handed over to their executioners.

And we, the few survivors, were left behind to bear witness and tell the tale.

But before doing so, allow me, on behalf of your Commission on the Holocaust and its Advisory Board, to thank you, Mr. President, for summoning our Nation—and all nations—to keep their memory alive.

We also wish to express our profound gratitude to all the distinguished guests

and national leaders for being here today at this unprecedented assembly, responding to this call for remembrance. No other country, and its government, besides Israel, has issued or heeded such a call, but then Israel is a case apart. Israel's commitment to memory is as old as its history itself.

On my first night in the camp, which was the last for most of my friends, my family, my relatives, my teachers, I wrote:

> Never shall I forget that night, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke.
>
> Never shall I forget the little faces of the children whom I saw being thrown into the flames alive beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget that sky.
>
> Never shall I forget those flames which murdered my hopes forever.
>
> Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live.
>
> Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my soul and turned my dreams into dust, into smoke.
>
> Never shall I forget these words even if I am condemned to live as long as God himself.

But Mr. President and friends—what does one do with such memories of fire—with so many fragments of despair? How does one live in a world which witnessed the murder of one million children and remained world?

Those of us who were there are haunted by those whose lives were turned into ashes, by those whose cemetery was the sky.

Terror-stricken families hiding in ghetto-cellars. Children running with priceless treasures: a potato or two, a crumb of bread. Endless lines of quiet men and women on their way to mass graves, reciting the Kaddish, the prayer for the dead, over themselves. Teachers and their pupils, mothers and their infants, rabbis and their followers, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, princes and beggars—all pushed inexorably toward death. "Father," says a young boy, "is it painful to die? Must I die?" "Think of something else," answers the father. "Think of tomorrow."

Treblinka and Ponar, Auschwitz and Babi Yar, Majdanek and Blezec: What happened? Did creation go mad? Did God cover his face? Did the Creator turn against his creation? Did the God of Israel turn against the people of Israel? The question everyone asked upon arrival inside the gates was: What does it all mean? Was there a design, a secret pattern?

We didn't know, we still don't. How can anyone explain evil of such magnitude? How can anyone comprehend so much pain and anguish? One cannot conceive of Auschwitz with or without God. But what about man? Who can understand the calculated deprivation of the killers? The indifference of the onlookers? When Jews did have a possibility of leaving Europe, how many countries were there ready to accept them?

What was the Holocaust: an end or a beginning? Prefiguration or culmination? Was it the final convulsion of demonic forces in history? A paroxysm of centuries-old bigotry and hatred? Or, on the contrary, a momentous warning of things to come?

Turning-point or watershed, it produced a mutation on a cosmic scale, af-

fecting all possible areas of human endeavor. After Auschwitz, the human condition is no longer the same. After Treblinka, nothing will ever be the same. The Event has altered man's perception and changed his relationship to God, to his fellow man and to himself. The unthinkable has become real. After Belsen, everything seems possible.

Admittedly, I belong to a traumatized generation, hence I speak of my people, the Jewish people. But when I, as a Jew, evoke the tragic destiny of Jewish victims, I honor the memory of all the victims. When one group is persecuted, mankind is affected. Still, for the sake of truth, we must remember that only the Jewish people's extermination was an end in itself. Jewish victims, stripped of their identity and of their death, were disowned by the whole world. They were condemned not for what they did or said, but for who they were: sons and daughters of a people whose suffering is the most ancient in recorded history.

Every occupied nation, every underground movement received help from London, Washington or Moscow. Not the Jews: they were the loneliest victims of the most inhuman of wars. A single airdrop, a single rescue mission would have proved to them, and to the enemy, that they were not forgotten. But, Mr. President and friends, the truth is that they were forgotten.

The evidence is before us: The world knew and kept silent. The documents that you, Mr. President, handed to the Chairman of your Commission on the Holocaust, testify to that effect. Actually, pictures of Auschwitz and Birkenau had reached the free world much earlier. Still, when the Hungarian Jews began arriving there, feeding the flames with ten to twelve thousands persons a day, nothing was done to stop or delay the process. Not one bomb was dropped on the railway tracks to the death factories. Had there been a similar Joint Session of Congress then, things would have been different for many Jews.

And yet, and yet when the nightmare lifted, there was no hate in the hearts of those who survived. Only sadness. And, paradoxically, hope, hope as well. For some reason they were convinced that out of grief and so much suffering a powerful message of compassion and justice would be heard and received. They were convinced that the Messiah would come and redeem the world. They were convinced that, after Auschwitz, people would no longer yield to fanaticism, nations would no longer wage war, and racism, anti-Semitism and class humiliation would be banned forever, shamed forever.

Little did we know that, in our lifetime, we would witness more wars, new racial hostilities, and an awakening of Nazism on all five continents. Little did we know that, in our lifetime, books would appear in many languages offering so-called "proof" that the Holocaust never occurred, that our parents, our friends did not die there. Little did we know that Jewish children would again be murdered, in cold blood, by killers in Israel.

The survivors advocated hope, not despair. Their testimony contains neither rancor nor bitterness. They knew too well that hate is self-debasing and vengeance self-defeating. Instead of choosing nihilism and anarchy, they chose to opt for man. Instead of setting cities on fire, they enriched them. Many went to rebuild an ancient dream of Israel in Israel; they all chose to remain human in an inhuman society, to fight for human rights everywhere, against poverty everywhere and discrimination, for humankind, always.

For we have learned certain lessons. We have learned not to be neutral in times of crisis, for neutrality always helps the aggressor, never the victim. We have learned that silence is never the answer. We have learned that the opposite

of love is not hatred, but indifference. What is memory if not a response to, and against indifference?

So let us remember, let us remember for their sake, and ours: memory may perhaps be our only answer, our only hope to save the world from the ultimate punishment, a nuclear holocaust.

Let us remember, let us remember the heroes of Warsaw, the martyrs of Treblinka, the children of Auschwitz. They fought alone, they suffered alone, they lived alone, but they did not die alone, for something in all of us died with them.

APPENDIX F

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

TO

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

by

Elie Wiesel
Chairman

The Rose Garden
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Mr. President, Ambassador Evron, Distinguished Members of the Senate and House, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thirty-eight years ago on September 27th, 1941, during the *aseret yemei teshuva,* what we call in our tradition the Days of Repentence, thousands of Jewish men, women and children were led through the sunny and peaceful streets of Kiev to be slaughtered at a place called: Babi Yar. For ten days—from Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, until Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement—the massacre continued. The procession seemed endless. The killers killed, the victims tumbled into ditches, and creation somehow remained unchanged and undisturbed.

What took place in Kiev, Mr. President, was repeated elsewhere in hundreds and hundreds of towns and villages in the Ukraine, Lithuania, Byelorussia, Poland. All over Eastern Europe the process of destruction went on and on and on. Entire communities perished overnight. Families disappeared. Ancient dynasties whose lineage could be traced back to King David and Moses were swept away with the winds of ashes. And God Himself must have covered His face in pain and anguish. Were they but a spasm of history? A tear in the ocean? An experiment of eternity in death?

In the course of our study, Mr. President, we tried to capture some of their silent outcries. We asked them for guidance. We returned to some of the sites where they perished. And all those who were there came away changed.

Mr. President, we were struck first by the beauty of the surroundings; the hills around Treblinka, the skys over Birkenau, the silence in Auschwitz. The killers had chosen the most beautiful sites and the most poetic words for their most hideous crimes.

We were struck by the proximity to cities and villages. Treblinka, Mr. President, is a 2-hour bus or train ride from Warsaw. Babi Yar is part of Kiev. Buchenwald is near Weimar. Auschwitz is close to Cracow. Ten thousand human beings were being murdered and burned every day, and nearby, life went on as usual.

How was all this possible? We do not have the answer, Mr. President. Perhaps there is none. Any given answer must be the wrong answer. But the members

of your Commission believe, Mr. President, that we must seek an answer and this will not be easy. Unprecedented and unparalleled in magnitude, the Event of Auschwitz and Belsen is still surmounted by a wall of fire which no outsider can penetrate. All one can do is come close to the gate.

Some are living gates, the survivors. They alone know what happened. And they are ready and willing to share their knowledge; they know that they survived only to tell the tale, only to bear witness.

The words of the dead, too, are gates. Documents, poems, messages, diaries, letters, prayers, meditations; through them one can feel something of what they felt as they were waiting for the angel of death, for the Messiah.

I confess, Mr. President, that I belong to a traumatized generation and a traumatized people.

As a Jew, I was—and am—distressed by the tragic fate of the Jewish people; after all, they alone were destined to be totally annihilated; they alone were totally alone.

However, as a Jew I also came to realize that although all Jews were victims, not all victims were Jews.

But this is perhaps the first lesson we may draw from the Event, Mr. President, that although Jews were the first to be killed, they were not the only ones; others followed. The murder of one group inevitably provokes more murder.

We must also learn from what happened that words must be taken seriously. The time lapse between the antisemitic slogans in Berlin and the death industry in Treblinka was only 10 years.

We must take seriously all those who threaten other people today and all those who threaten the Jewish people today. From words to deed, the distance is not great.

We must also learn the dangers of indifference and neutrality. In times of evil, indifference to evil is evil. Neutrality always helps the killer, not the victim.

And we must learn the importance of stressing the moral dimension of all human endeavors. We have seen that scientists, scholars, physicians, politicians, and artists murder children, and still enjoy the cadence of a poem, the beauty of the painting. Culture without morality can easily push mankind to darkness, not redemption.

Yes, Mr. President, there are urgent lessons to be learned from this awesome event. And yet, and yet. We, the members of your Commission and their advisors are aware of our limitations. We have acquired some knowledge, but what are we to do with that knowledge? What are we to do with the whispers of men and women going to their graves? With the wisdom of ghetto children who knew more about life and death than the oldest of my teachers? What are we to do with the sounds of the dead; the mute dreams of the living? What are we to do with them?

We must share them, and we understood this most intensely when we visited Poland, Soviet Russia, and Israel. Birkenau arouses man's most secret anguish. Jerusalem symbolizes our most fervent hope, and, therefore, we are attached to Jerusalem in such love and admiration. We must share whatever we receive with conviction and dedication if mankind is to survive.

Thus, Mr. President, it is with a profound sense of privilege and hope that on behalf of the President's Commission on the Holocaust and its Advisory Board I present to you its report. And for your own historic initiative, Mr. President, it is submitted to you with infinite gratitude.

APPENDIX G

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE FINAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

The Rose Garden
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Chairman, the beauty of your words and the solemnity of your thoughts and the importance of the work of this Commission are all very impressive.

Eight months ago, I asked Elie Wiesel, and a distinguished group of Americans, some from the Congress, to take on an awesome responsibility. Jim Blanchard of Michigan and others said they couldn't be here because there is a vote pending in the House, but they have served well, along with a broad cross-section of Americans who have gone into this effort with a great deal of dedication and who have produced a report that will solve problems and picture for us proper actions in the future.

This is an awesome responsibility that you have performed. I asked this group to recommend a fitting memorial in the United States to the victims of the most unspeakable crime in all of human history—the Holocaust. Rarely has a Presidential Commission faced a more sobering or a more totally important challenge. This event of the Holocaust, the crime against humanity itself, has no parallel in human history. A philosopher wrote that human language itself breaks down when confronted with the monstrous challenge of describing this evil.

So I want to pay a special tribute, on behalf of our Nation, to all those who have contributed to this effort and for the tremendous service that you have performed.

Your very work as a Commission is part of a living memory to the victims of the Holocaust. Your grappling with the meaning of this event has helped bring new understanding and moral vision to all who must confront this question. Your historic trip to the concentration camps in Eastern Europe, at the Babi Yar in the Soviet Union, has helped to arouse the conscience of the world and helped remind us once again we must never forget. And I know our country appreciates the fact that many of you went on those trips, not at Government expense, but at your own expense.

Out of our memory and understanding of the Holocaust we must forge an unshakeable oath with all civilized people that never again will the world stand silent, never again will the world look the other way or fail to act in time to prevent this terrible crime of genocide.

In addition to the Jewish people who were engulfed by the Holocaust simply because they were Jews, 5 million other human beings were destroyed. About 3 million Poles, many Hungarians, Gypsies, also need to be remembered. To

memorialize the victims of the Holocaust, we must harness the outrage of our own memories to stamp out oppression wherever it exists. We must understand that human rights and human dignity are indivisible. Wherever our fellow human beings are stripped of their humanity, defiled or tortured or victimized by repression or terrorism or racism or prejudice, then all of us are victims. As Americans, we must, and we also will speak out in defense of human rights at home and everywhere in the world.

And I might add that as Americans we must share the responsibility for 40 years ago not being willing to acknowledge that this horrible event was in prospect.

And I think that the action of this Holocaust Commission is long overdue, because we have not had a constant center which could be visited by Americans of all faiths and all races to be reminded of our omission in the past, to have the memory of this horrible event kept vivid in our minds, to prevent a recurrence of such an action anywhere on earth in the future.

In view of the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust, it is particularly appropriate that we receive this report during the High Holy Days, just prior to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur is a day and time for looking back. It is a time for reflection. It is a time for remembrance. But it is also a time for the reaffirmation of life, a time for looking ahead.

So I will consider this report most carefully and will respond personally to this Commission and to the people of our Nation, with my personal prayer that the memory of the Holocaust shall be transformed into a reaffirmation of life. And as President, I can pledge to you that I will do everything in my power to carry out the recommendations of this report.

The Members of the Congress will be intensely interested in arousing support in the Legislature. And I am sure the people of this country will be looking with anticipation to this reminder of the victims and also a warning that this horrible event will never again occur on earth.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and all the members of the Commission.

APPENDIX H
COMMISSIONERS, ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS, STAFF

MEMBERS
PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

Mr. Elie Wiesel, Chairman
Congressman James J. Blanchard
Mr. Hyman Bookbinder
Senator Rudy Boschwitz
Professor Robert McAfee Brown
Professor Gerson D. Cohen
Senator John C. Danforth
Professor Lucy S. Dawidowicz
Ms. Kitty Dukakis
Mr. Benjamin R. Epstein
Rabbi Juda Glasner
Justice Arthur J. Goldberg
Professor Alfred Gottschalk
Congressman S. William Green
Father Theodore Hesburgh
Professor Raul Hilberg
Senator Henry M. Jackson
Professor Norman Lamm
Mr. Frank R. Lautenberg
Congressman William Lehman
Senator Claiborne Pell
Mr. Arnold Picker
Rabbi Bernard Raskas
Mrs. Hadassah Rosensaft
Mr. Bayard Rustin
Ms. Marilyn Shubin
Mr. Isaac Bashevis Singer
Congressman Stephen J. Solarz
Senator Richard B. Stone
Mr. Sigmund Strochlitz
Mr. Mark Talisman
Professor Telford Taylor
Mr. Glenn E. Watts
Congressman Sidney R. Yates

MEMBERS
ADVISORY BOARD
PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

Ms. Sylvia Becker
Dr. Michael Berenbaum
Mr. Irving Bernstein
Judge Thomas Buergenthal
Professor Yaffa Eliach
Mr. Max C. Gettinger
Ms. Helen-Joy Ginsburg
Mr. Aaron Goldman
Cantor Isaac Goodfriend
Ms. Grace Cohen Grossman
Rabbi Marvin Hier
Mr. Richard Krieger
Mr. Miles Lerman
Mr. Paul Lewis
Professor Franklin Littell
Mayor Frank Logue
Mr. Steven A. Ludsin
Mr. Benjamin Meed
Mr. Jay Martin Schechter
Mr. Richard Schifter
Mr. Nathan Shapell
Mr. Wilton S. Sogg
Mr. Abraham Spiegel
Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Mr. Siggi B. Wilzig
Mr. Irwin R. Ziff
Mr. Solomon Zynstein

17

STAFF
PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

Dr. Irving Greenberg
Director

Dr. Michael Berenbaum
Deputy Director

Ms. Marian Craig
Staff Assistant

APPENDIX I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Commission wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the services of many people who have given tirelessly of themselves for the work of the Commission. In particular, appreciation is expressed to Mr. James C. Gross of the National Capital Region, National Park Service, who served as the Commission's liaison with the Department of the Interior, and Ms. Charlita Lindsay who served as the Commission's secretary. Ms. Ginger Harris, Ms. Joy Hessler, Mr. Steven Ellman, Ms. Anne Kirk Smith, Mr. David Solomon, Ms. Jane Marks and Mr. Sam Totten gave substantive help to the Commission in a variety of activities necessary to fulfill our mandate.

To the Secretary of the Interior, the Honorable Cecil Andrus, to Mr. William Whalen, Director of National Park Service, and to Mr. Manus J. Fish, Director of the National Capital Region, National Park Service, as well as their entire staffs go the Commission's deepest thanks for the many ways in which they have been of assistance and for the graciousness with which they offered their help and expertise.

The Commission is indebted to Ms. Mildred Lehman who served as Public Information Officer and to Dr. Linda Berenbaum who helped in the preparation of this report not only for their assistance but for the manner in which it was offered.

Above all, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation to the members of the White House staff, especially Mr. Edward Sanders, Senior Advisor to the President, Ms. Sara Seanor, his Staff Assistant, and Mr. Seymour Bolten of the Domestic Policy Staff for their unceasing efforts on behalf of the Commission.

19

☆U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1979 O— 302-093/6618